

IN THE CLAIMS

Applicant hereby presents the claims, their status in the application, and amendments thereto as indicated:

1. (Currently Amended) A storage device comprising:
a processor localized to a computer;
a computer interface communicably connected to the processor, wherein the computer interface is adapted to enable communications exclusively between the computer and the processor to enable the processor to communicate with a computer;
a network interface communicably connected to the processor to enable the processor to communicate with a remote file server, wherein the processor is adapted to employ the network interface for communications exclusively with the remote file server; and
a storage means communicably connected to the processor, the processor being adapted to have read and write access to the storage means, wherein upon receipt of a file request from the computer the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine whether the file is cached on the storage means and provide the file to the computer on a read-only basis if the file is cached on the storage means, (2) request the file from the file server if the file is not cached on the storage means, and if the file is obtainable from the file server, cache the obtained file on the storage means and provide the obtained file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file unavailable notice to the computer if the file is not cached on the storage means and not obtainable from the file server.

2. (Original) The storage device of claim 1, wherein the computer is communicably connected to a network server through the network interface.

3. (Original) The storage device of claim 1, wherein the storage means comprises random access media.

4. (Currently Amended) A computer network comprising
a file server;
a network server;
a computer communicably connected to the network server, the computer being remotely disposed from the file server and the network server;

a storage device communicably connected to the computer and the file server, the storage device being localized to the computer and comprising a processor, a computer interface, a network interface, and a storage means, wherein

the computer interface is adapted to enable communications exclusively between the computer and the storage device;

the processor is adapted to employ the network interface for communications exclusively with the remote file server;

the processor ~~being~~ is adapted to have read and write access to the storage means; and ~~, wherein~~

upon receipt of a file request from the computer the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine whether the file is cached on the storage means and provide the file to the computer on a read-only basis if the file is cached on the storage means, (2) request the file from the file server if the file is not cached on the storage means, and if the file is obtainable from the file server, cache the obtained file on the storage means and provide the obtained file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file unavailable notice to the computer if the file is not cached on the storage means and not obtainable from the file server.

5. (Original) The computer network of claim 4, wherein the computer is communicably connected to the network server through the storage device.

6. (Original) The computer network of claim 4, wherein the storage means comprises random access media.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a file to a computer comprising

receiving in a storage device a request from the computer for the file, wherein the storage device is localized to the computer and includes including a storage means and a computer interface, the computer interface being adapted to enable communications exclusively between the computer and the storage device;

determining whether the file is cached on the storage means;

determining, if the file is not cached on the storage means, whether the file is available from a remote file server, and if the file is available from the remote file server, retrieving the file from the remote file server and caching the retrieved file on the storage means; and

providing to the computer the file on a read-only basis if the file is cached on the storage means.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 further comprising providing to the computer a response indicating that the file is not available if the file is not cached on the storage means.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7 further comprising deleting the cached file from the storage means upon receiving a command from the file server to delete the cached file.

10. (Original) A method for providing updated files to a computer comprising:
providing to the computer, from a storage device, a list identifying a plurality of files which the storage device may retrieve from a file server;

retrieving from the file server, with the storage device, a first file of the plurality of files when the computer communicates to the storage device a request for the first file;

caching within the storage device a copy of the first file that the computer may access on a read-only basis;

receiving at the storage device notice from the file server that an updated version of the first file exists on the file server, whereupon the cached copy of the first file is deleted.

11. (New) A storage device comprising:

a processor;

a computer interface communicably connected to the processor to enable the processor to communicate with a computer;

a network interface communicably connected to the processor to enable the processor to communicate with a file server; and

a storage means communicably connected to the processor, the processor being adapted to have read and write access to the storage means, wherein upon the computer being booted, the computer sends a request for a file to the processor, the file being a bootstrap file or operating system file, and upon receipt of the request, the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine whether the boot file is cached on the storage means and provide the boot file to the computer on a read-only basis if the boot file is cached on the storage means, (2) request the boot file from the file server if the boot file is not cached on the storage means, and if the boot file is obtainable from the file server, cache the obtained boot file on the storage means and provide the obtained boot file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file unavailable notice to the computer if the boot file is not cached on the storage means and not obtainable from the file server.

12. (New) The storage device of claim 11, wherein the computer is communicably connected to a network server through the network interface.

13. (New) The storage device of claim 11, wherein the storage means comprises random access media.

14. (New) A computer network comprising
a file server;
a network server;
a computer communicably connected to the network server;
a storage device communicably connected to the computer and the file server,
the storage device comprising a processor and a storage means, the processor being adapted to have read and write access to the storage means, wherein upon the computer being booted, the computer sends a request for a file to the processor, the file being a bootstrap file or operating system file, and upon receipt of the request, the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine whether the boot file is cached on the storage means and provide the boot file to the computer on a read-only basis if the boot file is cached on the storage means, (2) request the boot file from the file server if the boot file is not cached on the storage means, and if the boot file is obtainable from the file server, cache the obtained boot file on the storage means and provide the obtained boot file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file unavailable notice to the computer if the boot file is not cached on the storage means and not obtainable from the file server.

15. (New) The computer network of claim 14, wherein the computer is communicably connected to the network server through the storage device.